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Security Council

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Letter dated 31 March 2004 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a communication dated 17 March 2004 which I have received from the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

Letter dated 17 March 2004 from the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

You will recall that, on 2 April 2003, the Central Organ of the African Union Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution mandated the deployment, for one year, of the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), pending the deployment of a United Nations-mandated peacekeeping force. In taking that decision, the Central Organ was guided by the urgent need to consolidate the peace process in Burundi, following the signing of the October and December 2002 ceasefire agreements between the Transitional Government of Burundi and most of the Burundian armed groups.

Since then, significant progress has been made in the search for peace in Burundi, including the comprehensive power-sharing agreement endorsed by the Dar es Salaam Regional Summit of November 2003. While the challenges that lie ahead are enormous, there is today a unique window of opportunity to end the long-running conflict in Burundi. This process has been greatly facilitated by the African Mission in Burundi.

I should like to inform you that the achievements made so far in Burundi, particularly in the area of confidence-building, have been remarkable in spite of the fact that AMIB is confronted with severe financial and logistical constraints, which have made it difficult for the Mission to operate at its optimal level. As the Mission enters its eleventh month, the funds mobilized or pledged so far amount to only about 28 per cent of its total budget, this in spite of the persistent efforts by the Commission to mobilize resources for the Trust Fund set up for that purpose.

It is against this background, and as the mandate of AMIB draws to its end, that I would like to emphasize our firm conviction that the time has come for the United Nations to fully assume its responsibilities, through the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping mission, as envisaged in the ceasefire agreements referred to above. Such a deployment will not only enhance the peace process in Burundi but also provide momentum to the efforts to achieve security and stability, as well as development in Burundi and the region as a whole.

I should like to inform you that it was this conviction that informed the special appeal to the United Nations Security Council, made at the just concluded session of the African Union Executive Council, convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 15 and 16 March 2004, a copy of which is herewith attached for your consideration and necessary action (see enclosure).

Knowing your commitment to the search for peace in Africa and the tireless efforts you have deployed in support of the ongoing peace process in Burundi, and elsewhere on the continent, I am persuaded by the realization that you will do your utmost to facilitate the attainment of our common objective in Burundi by impressing upon and securing a decision by the United Nations Security Council to deploy United Nations peacekeeping forces in that country.

I would appreciate it if the contents of this letter could be brought to the attention of the President of the Security Council for the month of March and circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alpha Oumar **Konaré**

Enclosure

Appeal of the Executive Council of the African Union on Burundi

16 March 2004

The Executive Council of the African Union, meeting in its fourth ordinary session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 15 and 16 March 2004, examined the situation and the evolving developments in Burundi.

The Council welcomed the remarkable progress achieved in the search for lasting peace in that country.

It took note, with satisfaction, of the conclusion of the Pretoria Protocols of 8 October and 2 November 2003, respectively, as endorsed by the Dar es Salaam Regional Summit of 16 November 2003, as well as the significant improvement in the security situation in the country. It reiterated its urgent appeal to Agathon Rwasa's faction of PALIPEHUTU-FNL to end its attacks and join in the peace process.

The Council underscored the crucial role played by the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) in the consolidation of the peace process in the country.

It recalled that the deployment of AMIB was authorized by the Central Organ on 2 April 2003, pending the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force, in pursuance of the ceasefire agreements signed in October and December 2002, respectively.

The Council expressed its profound gratitude to the troop-contributing countries — South Africa, Ethiopia and Mozambique — and to the countries that provided military observers.

It recalled the visit of the Deputy President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, to New York, in December 2003, to brief the United Nations Security Council on developments in the peace process, and believes that it is time for the United Nations to fully assume its responsibility. To this end, the Council urged the United Nations Security Council to authorize, as early as possible, the deployment of a peacekeeping force in Burundi.

The Council made an urgent appeal to member States and the international community at large to provide financial and logistics support to backstop the activities of the African Mission in Burundi. It expressed its sincere gratitude to the partners of the African Union and to the member States which had already lent support to AMIB.